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GoM to examine levy of natural calamity cess

The GST Council has constituted a Group of Ministers under Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Kumar Khanna to suggest uniform policies for levying a special calamity cess in case of natural disasters in states. The seven-member GoM will also examine the constitutional and legal feasibility of levy of a special cess by states for revenue mobilisation in case of a natural calamity.

Khalistani bid to heckle Jaishankar at London rapped

Govt assails misuse of democratic freedom; UK claims its police acted swiftly, none held

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

TAKING strong exception to Khalistani supporters breaching the security of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in London, India on Thursday said it expects the UK to live up to its diplomatic obligations while deploring the "misuse of democratic freedoms".

"We have seen the footage of a breach of security during the visit of EAM to the UK. We condemn the provocative activities of this small group of separatists and extremists. We deplore their misuse of democratic freedoms. We expect the host government in such cases to fully live up to their diplomatic obligations," the External Affairs Ministry said.

Later, the UK strongly condemned the security breach, saying such attempts to "intimidate, threaten, or disrupt" public events are "completely unacceptable". The incident occurred when a group of pro-Khalistan extremists tried to disrupt Jaishankar's visit for a discussion at Chatham House in London. The breach took place as the minister was leaving the venue after the event.

A video circulating online shows an individual aggressively charging toward Jaishankar's convoy. Taking advantage of the police officers' brief hesitation, the protester tore the Tricolour while others in the group shouted slogans from a distance.



Video grab of the heckler

Earlier, Jaishankar held talks with the UK's Secretary of State for Home, Yvette Cooper, focusing on issues such as trafficking and extremism. Concerns over the activities of Khalistan separatists in the UK were reportedly part of the discussions, as India has repeatedly raised this matter with British authorities.

The British authorities said the police acted swiftly to address the situation. A Met Police spokesperson said the protester was quickly intercepted by officers. He did not get close to the minister, who was able to leave without further incident. There were no arrests.

In 16th budget, CM to propose more populist schemes

DEVARAJ B HIREHALLI @ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Siddaramaiah, who also holds the finance portfolio, is all set to present the state budget for the financial year 2025-26, at an estimated size of Rs 4.05 lakh crore, on Friday. He will create a history of sorts by presenting his 16th budget as finance minister, an all-time record by any finance minister of Karnataka.

Siddaramaiah had presented a Rs 27,354-crore revenue deficit budget with an outlay of Rs 3.71 crore in 2024-25. It's left to be seen whether this time it will be

a surplus budget or not.

"Over the past few days, we have held meetings with our cabinet ministers, senior officials from various departments, farmer leaders, minority and backward class organisations and religious heads. Through this budget, I have made an effort to listen to the aspirations of people from all castes, creeds and classes of society in a non-partisan manner. I believe that the budget is not just a calculation on a sheet of paper, but a manual for shaping the future of the seven crore Kammadigas of the state. Every citizen of the

SIDDU TO PRESENT BUDGET SITTING

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who had presented 15 budgets while standing, as is the norm, will present the 16th one sitting on a chair. This is owing to his ankle injury, which he has been suffering from for a month and has not fully recovered from yet.

state is covered by some government scheme. I am confident that I have made a sincere effort to benefit the beneficiary

ies through the budget," he posted on X.

This was a clear indication that the CM will propose more populist schemes, besides the guarantees, to ensure every individual is covered in one or the other schemes of the government, according to analysts.

The CM would try to deflect the blame on his government that its schemes are partisan, they added. But political analysts felt that the CM would present the budget keeping the upcoming local body polls in mind. **CONTINUED ON P4**

26/11 ACCUSED

Rana seeks US SC stay on extradition

SHEKHAR SINGH @ New Delhi

WEEKS after US President Donald Trump announced Mumbai terror attack accused **Tahawwur Rana's** extradition to India, the convict made a last-ditch plea before the US Supreme Court seeking an emergency stay on the decision. He claimed he faces a high risk of torture and death if handed over to India. Rana also argued that his extradition would violate international and US legal protections against torture.

His legal team claimed that Rana, now 64, is in deteriorating health and unlikely to survive long enough to stand trial in India. They also claimed that India's criminal justice system has a documented history of human rights violations, referencing US State Department reports detailing instances of extrajudicial killings, custodial torture and mistreatment of detainees.

On February 12, 2025, the day PM Narendra Modi arrived in Washington to meet President Trump, the State Department notified Rana's counsel that the Secretary of State had decided to authorise his surrender to India. His defense claimed that his identity as a Muslim of Pakistani origin, along with his past service in the Pakistani Army, would put him at a greater risk of mistreatment in India.



30,000+ taxpayers declare foreign assets worth ₹29,208 cr in spl drive

DIPAK MONDAL @ New Delhi

A special drive to 'nudge' taxpayers to disclose their foreign assets and income has resulted in over 30,000 taxpayers declaring foreign assets worth ₹29,208 crore and additional foreign income of ₹1,090 crore, according to government sources. The campaign also made 6,734 taxpayers change their residential status from resident to non-resident.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) launched the compliance-cum-awareness campaign on 17 November 2024, urging taxpayers to declare their foreign assets and income in revised income tax returns (ITRs) for assessment year (AY)

Common Reporting Standards helped

India is an adopter of Common Reporting Standards (CRS), under which more than 125 nations agreed to share financial information of individuals



2024-25. As part of the campaign, SMS and emails were sent to 19,501 taxpayers with high foreign account balances or significant foreign income from interest or dividends above a specified threshold. The tax department also organised 30 outreach sessions, seminars and webinars across India, engaging over 8,500 participants directly.

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